



RS EXCHANGE

REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

Weekly Report

Wednesday, July 8, 2020

Below are some highlights from the Governor's [Regional Solutions \(RS\) Coordinators](#), on behalf of the eleven interagency teams across Oregon.

Regional Solutions (RS) Director – Leah Horner

North Coast Region – Jennifer Purcell

- **North Coast Economic Recovery Team – *Background*** – The North Coast Economic Recovery Team is comprised of local, regional, state, and federal economic and workforce development partners. Convened by Regional Solutions, the team is sharing information about impacts and needs, resources and supports, and planning for recovery.
 - *Update* – Regional Solutions meets weekly with economic developers, chambers of commerce and downtown associations, destination management organizations, workforce partners, and ports to better understand the challenges they are facing as they respond to business needs. This week, North Coast partners discussed regional economic recovery opportunities, including:
 - Nearly \$500,000 in **Small Business Relief Funds** are available to Clatsop, Columbia, and Tillamook county businesses with 25 or fewer employees via grants administered by Col-Pac Economic Development District, Clatsop Economic Development Resources, Columbia County Economic Team, and the Tillamook County Economic Development Council.
 - A number of **Broadband Initiatives** are underway in the North Coast region. Conversations regarding discrete projects and regional strategic planning include cities, counties, schools, and economic development partners. Applications for state broadband funding seek to expand access to broadband in the region to support distance learning.
 - The **North Coast Food Trail** is garnering significant attention, celebrating the economic development efforts that have successfully connected food producers with customers in the region, supporting a resilient and sustainable food system on the North Oregon Coast. The work of the Tillamook Coast Visitors Association and a regional network of partners was featured as the cover story in last week's Capital Press newspaper. (See [Comeback trail: How a farm-to-table restaurant network is recovering from COVID-19](#)) Additionally, the Oregon Lottery Commission recently chose the North Coast Food Trail project to highlight as an example of community economic development in Oregon. (See full story [here](#))

- **Seaside Convention Center** – Regional Solutions has been working with the Seaside Convention Center to navigate the needs of specific events to ensure the venue as well as the events are meeting all of the state’s guidance and relevant operating criteria.
- **Venue and Events Economy** – Regional Solutions has been working with economic development professionals on the North Coast to better understand the impacts of COVID on our region’s events economy. The events economy is diverse, including public venues, private and not-for-profit event spaces, community centers, and meeting halls; convention centers and fairgrounds; nonprofit organization fundraisers, community events and festivals. Many of these events are cornerstones of the north coast economy, attracting visitors and visitor spending, expanding cultural opportunities for both visitors and residents, and building community. The multiplier effect for local businesses, including restaurants, retail, and hotel and lodging providers is significant, and while visitors are beginning to return to the north coast, it is evident that this critical tourism driver will be slow to recover.
- **Economic Recovery** – The North Coast Regional Solutions Team is beginning conversations about how equity in recovery and economic opportunity intersect with our work in Tillamook, Clatsop, and Columbia counties. The team is reviewing regional priorities and projects, policies and resource investments, leading with equity and economic opportunity as we consider next steps for economic recovery.
- **Salmonberry Trail River and Canyon Segments Plan Review Committee** – Work is well underway to develop a Master Plan for the River and Canyon segments of the Salmonberry Trail. Regional Solutions and the Oregon Department of Forestry, representing the Salmonberry Trail Intergovernmental Agency (STIA), are co-convening a River and Canyon Segments Plan Review Committee. Membership applications are available [here](#) and will be accepted through July 19. The committee will inform the development and refinement of the Master Plan for the River and Canyon segments. Members will be selected by the co-conveners and will include a diversity of demographic, geographic, and trail-related perspectives. The co-conveners expect 5 or 6 virtual meetings to be held this year, beginning in mid-August.

Mid-Valley Region – Jody Christensen

- **Mid-Valley Community Outreach Alliance**, a BIPOC group meeting weekly, includes representatives from Pineros Y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN), Mujeres Luchadoras Progresistas (MLP), Latino Business Alliance (LBA), Oregon Human Development Corporation (OHDC), Oregon Employment Office – Woodburn, Advanced Economic Solutions, Farmworker Housing Development Corp (FHDC), Unidos Bridging Community, Western Oregon University (WOU) Multicultural Center, Mano a Mano – Salem, Izo Marketing, City of Independence - Community Engagement, Portland General Electric (PGE), Oregon Childhood Development Coalition (OCDC), Oregon Education Association, the Higher Education Coordinating Committee (HECC), Northwest Human Services, AHIVOY!, Consulado de Mexico en Portland, and Micronesian Islander Community OREGON. Strategic Economic Development Corp (SEDCOR), Willamette Workforce Partnership (WWP), the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments (MWVCOG), Business Oregon, and the Chemeketa Small Business Development Center join the meetings as well.
 - This week, we discussed how to market the upcoming Mid-Valley Small Business Grant opportunity (see below) to the BIPOC communities. There was concern about reaching underserved business owners who likely have not ever filled out a grant application. Celia Nunez with the Chemeketa Small Development Center offered to host two online webinars, one in English and one in Spanish, to help applicants.
 - In addition, two areas of concern that need more attention are marketing about mask wearing and farm crew supervisor COVID training.

- **Mid-Valley Small Business Grant Announced** – This week, the Willamette Workforce Partnership and the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments announced a new small business grant opportunity funded by Business Oregon.

Subvenciones están disponible para apoyar a empresas afectados por COVID-19 en los condados de Marion, Polk y Yamhill.

- The first round of funding will be distributed to businesses in the three county area with up to 25 employees. The amount of the grant will be dependent upon number of employees and fixed operating expenses. Grant amounts will range from \$2,500 to \$25,000. Applications will be available on the Willamette Workforce Partnership website (willwp.org) on Tuesday, July 21 at noon. Applications will close at noon on Thursday, July 23.
- La primera ronda de financiación se distribuirá a las empresas en el área de los tres condados con hasta 25 empleados. El monto de la subvención dependerá de la cantidad de empleados y los gastos operativos fijos. Los montos de las subvenciones oscilarán entre \$ 2,500 y \$ 25,000. Las solicitudes estarán disponibles en el sitio web de Willamette Workforce Partnership (willwp.org) el martes 21 de julio al mediodía. Las solicitudes se cerrarán al mediodía del jueves 23 de julio
- Eligible businesses must be headquartered in Oregon, have 25 or fewer employees, have been adversely affected by Executive Order 20-12 or have a one-month decline in sales greater than 50% in the month of March or April 2020. For profit and nonprofit organizations are eligible. If a business has accessed federal CARES Act funding, they are not eligible for this program.
- Las empresas elegibles deben tener su sede en Oregón, tener 25 empleados o menos, haber sido afectadas negativamente por la Orden Ejecutiva 20-12 o tener una disminución de un mes en las ventas superior al 50% en el mes de marzo o abril de 2020. Organizaciones con fines de lucro y sin fines de lucro son elegibles. Si una empresa ha accedido fondos federales de la Ley CARES, no son elegibles para este programa.
- Two grant application webinars will be hosted by the Chemeketa Small Business Development Center. The webinars, one in English and one in Spanish, will help applicants prepare for the application.
 - [¡Aquí para ayudar! Revisión del proceso de solicitud de fondos de subvención.](#) - [Register Online](#) - Lunes, el 13 de Julio - 6pm - 7pm
 - [Here to Help! Grant Funds Application Process Review](#) - [Register Online](#) - Monday, July 20 - 6pm - 7pm
- **Mid-Valley Economic Recovery Team (ERT)** – includes representatives from the Counties, Willamette Workforce Partnership, Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments, Strategic Economic Development Corporation (SEDCOR), the Small Business Development Center, early learning hubs, local emergency management, the Employment Department, Business Oregon, chambers, regional destination marketing organizations, utilities, non-profits, tribal government, and federal delegation representatives. The goal is to create robust communication and networks in the response and recovery work. The ERT has moved from two meetings per week to one until the end of July.
 - Last week, Jason Brandt, President and CEO of the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association (ORLA), joined the meeting to discuss how COVID has affected the industries. Jason shared the following:
 - With the industry having 12,500 locations around the state, ORLA’s challenge is to stay proactive in a reactive environment. Businesses are dealing with a

minimum wage that increases, along with coronavirus-related mask requirements, social distancing, and the associated responsibilities around monitoring, enforcement, etc.

- The coast is starting to recover a little more quickly, with almost-normal occupancy rates. The Willamette Valley is still slow, and Central Oregon numbers are around 50-55% occupancy, compared to their normal summer rate of 90%.
- Hospitality is the second largest private employer in Oregon behind the health care industry, with 182,000 people employed before the pandemic in 10,000 food service and 2,500 lodging businesses. ORLA estimates that only 70% of restaurants will survive this crisis. In lodging, there is a lot of “bleeding” of cash and businesses are actively trying to slow the loss of cash. Resources like the Payroll Protection Program have already been fully utilized, so businesses are trying to “right-size” expenses according to the limited income they are receiving by reducing workforce to skeleton crews and limiting menus in restaurants.
- Another challenge that restaurants have been facing is the supply of protein available, as large suppliers like Sysco and US Foods have been impacted by closures of meat packing firms in the Midwest. ORLA has proposed a \$75 million Hospitality Relief Program out of remaining Coronavirus Relief Funds to help address the financial impacts to the industry.
- Limited liability protection concerns continue for business owners.
- This week, Sandi Elwood, Berkshire Hathaway Home Services, shared a surprising update on the Mid-Valley housing market. She stated the market is hot with properties turning over in 30 days or less. The inventory is tight. Several clients are migrating from larger communities looking for a “quieter” life.
- During the roundtable discussion:
 - Dean Bender, Polk Local Emergency Manager (LEM), shared that the state was sending out KN95 masks to the LEMs to distribute to businesses with the help of chambers of commerce. This activity is happening statewide.
 - Utility partners are nervous about the increasing deferred bills. Some accounts are up to \$2000 for residential and up to \$10,000 for commercial. Several utilities are discussing payment option and disconnection policies.
 - Tori Middelstadt, our regional destination marketing representative, identified that the increased activity along the Willamette River Water Trail has created concerns about maintaining restrooms and garbage collection areas.

Southern & South Coast Regions – Alex Campbell

- **South Coast Umpqua Region:**
 - **South Coast Umpqua Economic Recovery Team:**
 - Matt Green from Oregon Health Authority (OHA) addressed the new statewide face covering policy, rationale, etc.
 - Sen. Roblan raised concerns about possible mis-attribution of cases on OHA’s outbreak list.

- **Charleston Ice House:**
 - Port of Coos Bay has announced that the ice house rebuild (due to fire last winter) is on track to re-open in August.
- **South Coast Umpqua Regional Solutions Advisory Committee:**
 - Presentation on Off Shore Wind developments by representative of “OCEAN,” a new non-profit advocacy group. Suggested the possibility of new siting efforts to speed implementation of Executive Order 20 04.
 - Advisory Committee endorsed a proposed “Rogue Siskiyou Regional Fire and Emergency Services Training Facility” as a Regional Solutions project. Currently seeking \$160K to fund business plan development.
- **Southern Oregon Region**
 - **Southern Oregon Recovery Team:**
 - Workforce representatives raised concerns about liability related to COVID and training, internships, etc.
 - Review of new statewide face covering mandate by OHA.
 - Several local governments implementing “parklets” to allow more outdoor space for restaurants.
 - Josephine County 4H was able to pull off their annual lamb auction virtually.

Metro Region – Raihana Ansary

- **Metro Economic Response Team Meeting on June 25, 2020 – Background** – Metro Regional Solutions (RS) is partnering with Greater Portland, Inc. (GPI), to co-convene a Metro Economic Response Team in order to share information and resources related to COVID-19. In addition to state agencies (Business Oregon, Oregon Employment Department, Bureau of Labor & Industry, Small Business Advocate, Oregon Housing & Community Services, and Travel Oregon), a number of partners in the Portland-metro region have been invited to participate including business associations, city and county economic development practitioners and elected leaders, community-based organizations, labor, members of the Governor’s Metro Regional Solutions Advisory Committee and workforce development organizations.
 - Update – Many thanks to new Oregon Employment Department Director, David Gerstenfeld, for joining the meeting and providing an update on unemployment insurance (UI) claims for the metro region. Director Gerstenfeld also shared efforts underway to address the backlog of UI claims at the agency.

Data for continued claims for regular unemployment insurance (UI):

 - In Portland Metro area, comparative composition is not that different from pre-pandemic.
 - Group with lowest increase in continuing claims was among Black claimants
 - Claims rose by 451 percent
 - Group with highest increase in claims was among Asian claimants
 - 1,341 percent increase

Biggest challenge is with PUA – Least amount of data, and hardest to get caught up on.

General data (since third week of March, when large influx of claims began)

- 172,000 claims processed for Portland metro area.
 - Represents 16 percent of region’s labor force.
 - Doesn’t include amount of unprocessed regular UI claims, or any of the PUA claims.
- Most industries are affected. Heaviest hit:
 - Accommodations
 - Food services
 - Arts and entertainment
- Also seeing disproportionate impact on low-wage industries. Assistance is even more crucial for people in these industries.
- Statewide, more than 500,000 regular UI claims filed since mid-March, compared to 40,500 for same period last year.
- PUA didn’t exist until end of March. OED has received nearly 100,000 applications; still have 70,000 applications to process.

Steps OED is taking in near future:

- Improved communication about how programs work
 - New website
 - Recorded public-facing webinars
 - Providing assistance for most vulnerable populations
 - Setting up phone lines up in other languages
- **Kellogg Creek Dam – *Background*** – Kellogg Creek dam under OR-99E in Milwaukie prevents effective fish passage into the nine miles of Kellogg Creek tributary to the Willamette River. A full dam removal and bridge reconstruction project estimated to cost upwards of \$20M is prohibitively expensive and has no funding strategy to move forward. The City of Milwaukie and the North Clackamas Watersheds Council would like to work with the Governor’s Metro Regional Solutions Team (RST)—specifically the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), the Department of State Lands (DSL) and the Governor’s Natural Resource Office (GNRO)—to examine the viability and pros and cons of potential lower-cost fish passage alternatives that meet the needs of all state agencies and the city of Milwaukie.
 - *Update* – Per the request of the North Clackamas Watersheds Council and the City of Milwaukie, Metro RS convened interagency state partners including the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW), the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) to see if they could commit to completing their respective roles and responsibilities associated with a full or partial dam removal or retrofit within the next 10 years. Such commitments were requested to help make the case for Metro Regional Government to allocate partial funds and list the project on their Transportation 2020 (T2020) bond list. Unfortunately, Metro’s Transportation 2020 Bond is no longer a potential strategy, but nevertheless many thanks to Jeff Boechler at ODFW, Vanessa Vissar at ODOT and Kevin Parrett at DEQ, for their quick turnaround of letters reflecting the conditions and parameters of their agency’s commitments. These letters help illustrate the importance of this priority Metro RS project for the region. As an immediate next step, Metro RS will have a follow-up meeting with the North Clackamas Watersheds Council and the City of Milwaukie to review the details of their scope for a proposed hydraulic study and offer technical

insights. Thereafter, Vanessa Vissar, ODOT liaison on the Metro RS Team may look into potential funding sources, if any, for an \$80-100,000 hydraulic study of the dam.

North Central Region – Nate Stice

- **North Central Oregon Recovery Team** - The Mid-Columbia Economic Development District and Region Regional Solutions stood up the bi-state Columbia Gorge/Mid-Columbia Bi-State Economic Resilience Team. The structure for the team was outlined in a 2019 report produced by [MCEDD](#), based on work Regional Solutions led efforts around fire recovery for the 2017 Eagle Creek Fire and 2018 Grass Fires. The emphasis of the team this week has been three-fold: 1) implementing the first continuity phase training; and 2) working with counties on mandatory face covering requirements; 3) continued work around migrant and seasonal farm worker supports.
 - The team hosted a training for over 100 participants on face coverings and workplace outbreak procedures. The training featured local public health, Oregon OSHA, the Lewis and Clark Small Business Legal Clinic, and others. Thanks to the many partners (Chambers, Regional Destination Marketing Organizations,, and others) that made this happen, and special thanks to Oregon Health Authority's Maria Castro who provided a quick presentation on the many worker supports available during outbreak situations. Here is the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDDC56W6h2E>
 - Next week the team will focus on: 1) round two of continuity phase training; 2) education reopening and nexus with the economy; 3) impacts on regionals projects to state budget situation and path forward.

Central Region – Annette Liebe

- **Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs** – Due to the ongoing drinking water supply issues in Warm Springs and the cancelation of the end of session bond sale, Regional Solutions is working closely with the Tribe to understand which pieces of ongoing work are impacted. The bond sale funds had been identified as match in an application to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for full design and engineering of their system to get improvements shovel ready. The application has not yet been awarded, as the tribe needs to provide some additional information before July 20. Rep. Bonham is working on an E-Board request for a portion of the \$7.8M that was in the bond sale. Ideally, the decision on those funds will be made prior to July 20 to support the EPA grant application. Business Oregon is moving forward with hiring a project manager in consultation with the Tribe. Regional Solutions is also working with federal agency partners to re-convene a virtual federal, state and philanthropic funders summit focused on the water supply system.
- **Workforce Housing** – Regional Solutions co-convened a meeting with Central Oregon employers to understand current efforts to create employee housing. The employers who have been working to build (or lease) housing for their employees have put most of this on hold. The destination resorts who have leased housing are seeing less demand for this housing due to less demand for housekeeping, etc. RS will check in again as Central Oregon saw an 85% occupancy rate over the 4th of July holiday weekend. The meeting also focused on getting human resource managers information about available rental assistance programs for employees who are eligible.

South Central Region – Annette Liebe

- **South Central Oregon Response Team – *Background*** – South Central Regional Solutions (RS) Team along with county commissioners, city leaders, chambers, economic and workforce development, downtown organizations, local legislators, federal congressional delegation representatives and the Regional Solutions Advisory Committee have been meeting since mid-March.
 - *Update:* This week’s agenda highlights:
 - 1) Employment Department Update – many thanks to David Gerstenfeld for joining to give an overview of the department’s progress processing UI/PUA claims. David did a great job helping people understand the challenges of processing such a large volume of claims and implementing new federal programs. There was also discussion about future federal programs and whether the additional \$600/week was providing a disincentive for people to return to work.
 - 2) Working from home – Josh Lehner, Office of Economic Analysis, provided an overview of what we are seeing in terms of people who are able, or are choosing, to work from home. There is some indication that this trend will continue/grow post COVID. Broadband is the key infrastructure needed to support working from home. People are moving to more affordable places to live, as they are more able to work from home. Klamath County has many attributes that could be appealing to individuals who can work from home.

Greater Eastern & Northeast Regions – Courtney Warner Crowell

- **Eastern Oregon Regional Economic Recovery Team** – This week Colt Gill from the Oregon Department of Education came to give an overview of the reopening schools framework and took questions from the Eastern Oregon Regional Economic Recovery Team. There were many questions about the guidance and the differences between rural and urban questions. For example, many school districts in Eastern Oregon only have one school nurse per county or district and not a school nurse in each school. It was a good discussion and we had many superintendents from across the region join in for the meeting. Additionally, we talked about the counties that are included on the Governor’s watch list which include four in Eastern Oregon.
- **Eastern Oregon Border Board** – The Eastern Oregon Border Board met this week and discussed the legislation that was passed during the short session that allows them to engage with a third party contractor. They are having conversations with both Oregon Community Foundation and Craft3 to administer the grants and loans respectively. Additionally, their new executive director Shawna Peterson has started and has vacated her role on the board. The Governor’s office will be working to fill both the board vacancy and the chair position in the coming weeks.